Only a few months after the publication by the present writer of the article on the possible or probable links with Maltese and Sicilian Arabic that may exist in Vatican Hebrew Ms. 411, four important bits of evidence came to light which further strengthen the author's suggestion that this unique collection of fifteenth century Judaeo-Arabic poems in a pointed text should be attributed to someone who lived in Sicily, if not Malta itself, with the preference given to the former possibility.

On page 180 of his Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes R. Dozy has an entry under جَرَاسِيَة, meaning cerise, with the vital information from Ibn al-Baitar that Sicilians say جَرَاسِيَة instead of تراضيام. \(^2\)

There is no evidence that this particular pronunciation extended also to Malta though the possibility cannot be ruled out.

The poems contain the very obscure word 'انبرلاك, obviously


a non-Arabic word. A search in several dictionaries before the
publication of the present writer's article proved unfruitful. A few
months later, a glance at some old documentary transcripts made
years before brought the following passage to light:

\textit{Item cortina una cum suo Inborlachio listato sericiis.}
The poems themselves similarly associate 'anburlak with cortina:

\begin{verbatim}
mansāfa min ṣuf el-dib 'ankēbut
hi l-qurtina
w(ō)r-'anburlak min quzqaz
min newer el-yaqtina
\end{verbatim}

Both 'anburlak and \textit{Inborlachio} would seem to refer to the bed
canopy, of course now long disused, still known as \textit{celu} or\
\textit{sopracelu}. However, Genevieve and Henri Bresc have already
studied the word from Sicilian documents. In their study \textit{La casa del}
"borghese" in Sicilia',\footnote{Genevieve e Henri Bresc, \textit{La casa del "Borghese": materiali per una etnografia storica della Sicilia}, \textit{Quaderni Stonci}, No. 31 (Ancona, Gennaio-Aprile 1976), p. 122.} this is what they say:

\begin{quote}
Ma il letto, con la sua cortina, le lenzuola listate di seta e l'\textit{imburlachium} (cielo di letto), il cassone, le tovaglioli, sono lo
specchio di una civiltà abbastanza ricca.
\end{quote}

For them, however, the origin of \textit{imburlachium} remains obscure.

It is clear, in any case, that this word can only be associated,
so far as is known, with Malta and Sicily. In the latter island, the
Brescs themselves have found it in no less than nine out of the 23
documents they examined for source material on middle class
homes in late medieval Sicily.\footnote{Ibid., table on p. 126.} In one particular marriage agree-
\footnote{Ibid., footnote 7 on p. 125.} not only does the word \textit{imburlachium} itself appear, but one
also finds another strange word, otherwise apparently unknown,
which is found in the Judaeo-Arabic documents of Vatican Hebrew
Ms. 411. This is the word \textit{dubler}:

\footnote{Mainz, p. 70.}
Dote: I vestiti della sposa, 'farsium unum pro lecto, mataracia
duo, plomacium unum, paria tria lintheaminum quarum unum debet
essere ad listas sericas ed alia due de tela alba nova, cultras
duas albas novas, cortinam unam, imburlachium unum, dublecta
tria, sectanas tres, dubleria seu mensalia quinque, tobalias
duas, ad aves... 

Needless to say, and understandably, Ernest Mainz was unable to
translate into French either 'anburlak or dubler.

One other phrase left without a French translation occurs in the
following two lines: 9

\[
\begin{align*}
zawg \text{ hawatem min } & \text{ gumar} \\
w(e)l-\text{aqfiya qetare\text{a} } \\
\end{align*}
\]

\text{Aqfiya} must be an irregular plural form of the Arabic word \text{waqf},
an ivory bracelet; \text{qetare\text{a} } would be the plural of \text{qatre\text{a} }. The lat-
ter has not been found in Arabic dictionaries but must be derived
from the Sicilian word \text{catrecia}, vertebrate bones. 10 The two lines
should therefore mean:

\begin{itemize}
\item A pair of rings [made] of dwarf fan palm leaves\textsuperscript{11}
\item And ivory necklaces [made] of vertebrate bones.
\end{itemize}

Once more, therefore, one is forced to resort to Romance Sicilian
for a full understanding of a part of the poems, and this would
pretty definitely exclude the possibility of a Maltese origin.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p.72.
\textsuperscript{10}A. Traina, \textit{Nuovo vocabolario Siciliano Italiano}, s.v.
\textsuperscript{11}In Maltese, and possibly in Sicilian Arabic, \text{gumar} is the plant known
botanically as 'dwarf fan palm': J. Borg, \textit{Descriptive Flora of the Maltese
Islands ...} (Malta, 1927), p.799.